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SPINOZA — A SUMMARY ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE AND TEACHING.

BY GEORGE S. MORRIS.

Two hundred years ago there died in Holland a quiet thinker, not in his lifetime unknown to fame, and yet apparently regardless of the world's applause, whose works have produced a powerful influence upon the thought of to-day. Not that he has been the acknowledged master of so many minds, nor that his thought was altogether new. But he gave powerful expression to a type and direction of philosophic thought, which many minds to-day, and especially those trained in scientific methods, do, whether consciously or unconsciously, but repeat. Some of the most powerful of speculative thinkers in modern times, also, and more than one literary genius of wide-spreading influence, have thought and written in more or less pronounced sympathy with the doctrine of Spinoza. It is sufficient, in this connection, to refer to such names as Lessing, Schleiermacher, Schelling, Goethe, and Hartmann. The present year, the second centennial anniversary of the philosopher's death, has been signalized by special honors to his memory. A memorial statue in The Hague was dedicated in the presence of a concourse of scholars, and words of appropriate eulogy were pronounced by the brilliant French writer, Ernest Renan. Not a few articles in reviews and separate monographs have been recently published concerning Spinoza's life and works. In Germany a new edition of his philosophical writings and correspondence, in the original (Latin) text has begun to appear (ed. by Dr. Hugo Ginsberg, published by Erich Kosch-ny, Leipzig).

Spinoza's "Life and Teaching," therefore, furnishes a timely subject for study. Nor will it be out of agreement with the spirit of this journal if, instead of writing at length *about* Spinoza, whether to praise or to blame, we content ourselves, in the present instance at least, with the presentation of a summary account of the thinker's life and thought, restraining for the most part any inclination to critical comment.

Baruch (Latin, Benedictus) de Spinoza was born in Amsterdam, Nov. 24, 1632. He belonged to a Jewish family, in comfortable circumstances, who with many others had been driven by

persecution from the Spanish peninsula to Holland. He was instructed in the rudiments of knowledge and in the religious faith of his nation by a Jewish master. To this was added elementary instruction in Latin by a German teacher, and then further classical study in the school of Franz Van den Ende, a physician of heterodox religious views.

Following the bent of the times, and his own inclination, Spinoza devoted himself earnestly to the study of mathematical and natural science, being encouraged and assisted in this by Ludwig Meyer, a zealous Cartesian. It was probably especially due to the influence of Meyer that Spinoza's attention was directed to the works of Descartes, which he did not fail soon to master.

Thus engaged, Spinoza did not carry out, in the sense intended by those who were originally set over him, their plan, that he should devote himself to theology. The rumor of his independence and heterodoxy in religious opinions early became current. The attempt is said to have been made to retain him in the Jewish communion by the offer of a generous pecuniary support, but without success. Anger armed against him the hand of a zealot, from whose attack Spinoza escaped with only a slight injury to the garment he was wearing. Fair means and foul having alike failed to convince him of his error, the synagogue proceeded to pronounce against him the ban of excommunication, accompanied with "all the curses of the firmament, which are written in the book of the law." This was in the summer of the year 1656, the twenty-fourth of Spinoza's life. In 1660, at the instance of the Rabbis, supported by the approval of the Reformed clergy, Spinoza was ordered by the town magistrate to leave Amsterdam for a certain number of months.

From this time until his death, Feb. 21, 1677, Spinoza dwelt in various places in Holland, principally Rhynsburg and The Hague, at which latter place he died. Not in such absolute seclusion as Descartes, yet, like him, avoiding notoriety and distinction, he led the quiet and solitary life of an earnest thinker. He was extremely simple in his tastes, being content with little, and supported himself in large measure by polishing glasses for optical instruments. He led a blameless life, taking a kindly interest in the welfare of those with whom he lived, and schooling himself by constant and successful effort to subject his emotional nature to the control of reason. He attracted the attention of the learned and the great, and carried on an extensive correspond-

ence. In the year 1673 the professorship of philosophy in the University of Heidelberg was offered him. This he declined to accept, having, as he said, never designed to teach; fearing lest the work of instructing youth should seriously interfere with the prosecution of his own studies, and distrusting his ability so to instruct as not at least to seem to be "disturbing the religion of the State."

Of the works of Spinoza, all written in Latin, the two following were published during his lifetime: *Principles of the Philosophy of Descartes*, geometrically demonstrated, (1663), and *Theologico-political Tractate*, (1670). The object of the latter work is to prove "that the liberty to philosophize may not only be permitted without prejudice to religion and the public peace, but that it cannot be withheld without the destruction of both." The work is largely filled with Biblical criticism and interpretation, and is a classical work in the literature of modern rationalism. After the death of Spinoza, were published the *Ethics*, *Demonstrated in Geometrical Order*, and *Tractates on Politics*, and on the *Treatment of the Understanding*, together with the author's correspondence (1677).

The *Ethics* is a systematic presentation in the form of definitions, axioms, propositions, and demonstrations of Spinoza's metaphysical, psychological and ethical views. It is the principal one of his purely philosophical works. Some twenty-five years ago, an early production of Spinoza, translated into Dutch, being a "Tractate Concerning, God, Man, and Human Happiness," was discovered. It is partly an epitome of the views expressed in the "Ethics," and more particularly marks a certain stadium in the progress of those speculations of Spinoza, of which the latter work contains the final results.

THE "ETHICS" OF SPINOZA.

Spinoza inherited from Descartes the predilection for the mathematical method, the definitions of soul and matter as respectively thinking and extended substance, the criterion of truth and falsehood as lying in the relative clearness and distinctness or confusion of ideas, and the ontological argument for God's existence. But the free will which Descartes ascribed (in different senses) to God and man, was utterly denied by Spinoza. The final causes, which the former was inclined to ignore, if not to reject (and which, in order to be consistent with many parts of

his system, he should have denied completely), Spinoza absolutely rejected. The distinction made, but not very clearly defined, by Descartes between substance in the primary sense (self-existent substance, God) and substance in the secondary sense (created substances, bodies, souls) was repudiated by Spinoza, who admitted but one substance, infinite in all its infinitely numerous attributes. Of this substance the souls and bodies of men, and all other finite things, were but accidents, and all that took place in them was but the necessary and eternally determined result of the operation of its powers and laws. To it Spinoza gives interchangeably the names "God" and "nature." His philosophy may therefore be termed with equal right philosophical naturalism or pantheism.

The Ethics, in which the attempt is made to furnish a mathematical demonstration of this system, is divided into five parts, of which the first treats of "God." This begins, after the manner of geometrical treatises, with a series of definitions and axioms. The very first definition suggests one of the ideas which dominate and, as it were, strike the key-note of the whole discussion. This is the idea of causation. "By that which is its own cause (*causam sui*)," says Spinoza, "I mean that, the essence of which involves existence, or that, the nature of which cannot be conceived except as existing." The idea, the expression "*causa sui*," and the definition are borrowed from Descartes. It is evident that by the word "cause," in this connection, must be meant the *sufficient reason*. A cause implies an effect from which it is distinguished. Cause and effect cannot therefore, properly speaking, be identical. Hence a literal *causa sui* is impossible, and the idea is absurd. The eternal, or, in the language of Spinoza, "that, the essence of which involves existence," can have no cause. But it may and must have a *sufficient reason* for its existence, and it is this reason, and not a cause, which, in the case in hand, the "essence" referred to supplies. While the so-called "Principle of Sufficient Reason" in metaphysics is substantially recognized by Spinoza (see, for example, Eth., P. I., Prop. XI., 2d dem.), yet it belonged to a younger contemporary and critic of Spinoza, Leibnitz, formally to enunciate it, as distinguished from the principle or law of causation.

The other dominant idea of the "Ethics" is that of substance. This is declared in Def. III., to be "that which is in itself and is conceived by itself; that is, that, the conception of which does

not require, in order that we may form it, the conception of aught else." The expression "in itself" (*in se*) is of course used figuratively — certainly not with that mathematical exactness which we should naturally expect—and marks the distinction between substance and modes, which latter, like the Aristotelian "accidents," will be defined as existing, not "in themselves," but "in something else." The assertion that substance exists in itself, is therefore equivalent to the statement that it exists independently of anything else.

But that which we are here told concerning substance consists in a general averment respecting the manner in which it exists and is by us conceived. What substance more definitely is and under what form it is perceived or known, is declared in the next (fourth) definition, as follows: "By *attribute* I understand that which the intellect perceives in substance as constituting its essence." The attributes of substance are therefore identical with substance itself, and are simply the forms, under which the latter is (to use the term commonly employed by Spinoza) objectively "expressed" and known. Hence Spinoza can (see first letter to Oldenburg) also define the term attribute, like substance, as covering "all that which is conceived by and in itself, so that the conception of it involves the conception of naught else."

Def. V. explains the word *mode* as a name for the "affections of substance, or that which is in something other than itself, by the aid of which also it is understood." "By God," says Spinoza in the following Definition VI., "I understand absolutely infinite being, that is, substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses an eternal and infinite essence." "We will term that thing *free* which exists simply by the necessity of its nature and is determined to action by itself alone; and that *necessary* or *constrained*, which is made by something other than itself to exist and act in a certain and definite manner." (Def. VII.). Finally, eternity is "existence itself, in so far as existence must be conceived as following necessarily from the very definition of that which is eternal, and from the definition alone." (Definition VIII.).

Following the definitions, Spinoza lays down as "axioms" the following propositions: "All existing things are either in themselves or in something other than themselves." "Whatever cannot be conceived through the aid of the conception of another thing, must be conceived through itself." "From a given defi-

nite cause there follows necessarily an effect, and, on the other hand, if no definite cause be given, it is impossible that the effect should follow." "Knowledge of an effect involves and depends upon knowledge of its cause." "Things, which have nothing in common, cannot be known the one through the other, or the conception of the one does not involve the conception of the other." "A true idea must agree with its object." "The essence of anything which can be conceived as not existing, does not involve existence."

The above definitions (with the addition of one, the second, which states the meaning of the word *finite*), and axioms supply ostensibly the apparatus of demonstration, upon which the following superstructure of propositions, corollaries, and scholia rest. Of course, propositions which have been previously demonstrated are also used in the demonstration of those which come after.

The general purport of the conclusions reached in Part I., is, that there exists but one substance, that that substance is, not simply in kind, but absolutely, infinite, the real and exclusive possessor of all logically possible attributes, and is called God; that the divine nature and the laws of its manifestation (i. e., the laws of all *phenomena*) are inherently immutable, and that all forms of finite existence and action, including those which, like the human mind and will, seem most independent, are but necessary modes of the existence and agency of the one divine substance.

More particularly the argument arrives at its goal through demonstration of the following propositions: Substance is logically prior to its accidents, but it is identical with its attributes, so that, if these be changed, it is changed. Possessing different attributes, substances can have nothing in common with each other, nor can one be the cause of the other. Hence "there cannot be in the nature of things two or more substances of the same nature or attribute" (Prop. V.). Hence, also, substance is uncaused, or "it belongs to the nature of substance to exist" (VII.). This is the description which Descartes had given of the divine "substance," (it is the Cartesian "essence involving existence,") and the further Cartesian qualification of this substance as "infinite," is "proved" by Spinoza in Prop. VIII. to apply to "all substances." In Prop. XI. that is established concerning God (as defined in Def. VI.), which in Prop. VII. is demonstrated respecting substance, namely (by the ontological argu-

ment) that he exists. Now if "all substance" is necessarily infinite, it is reasonably evident that there can be only one substance; and if God, defined as an absolutely infinite being, necessarily exists, it is obvious that he is the one substance. These two conclusions are combined in Prop. XIV.: "Other than God no substance can exist or be conceived." Hence the manifest inference, drawn in "Corollary II.," that "extended and thinking things are either attributes of God or affections of attributes of God." This relation of "things" to God is termed, in the following proposition, "being in God," without whom "nothing can be conceived" (XV.). In a scholium to this proposition the affirmation is defended and discussed, that "extended substance is one of the infinite attributes of God." As such it is itself infinite, one, and indivisible. It is indestructible. "Water, as such, may be divided and its parts separated: but not, regarded as material substance; for, in this latter point of view it can neither be separated nor divided. Further, water as water is subject to generation and decay, but as substance to neither." This is equivalent to the more modern assertions of the indestructibility of "matter" and "force."

From the infinite and exclusive reservoir of substance and power, or "from the necessity of the divine nature, must follow an infinite variety of effects in an infinite variety of ways, i. e., everything which can be conceived by an infinite intellect" (Prop. XVI.). Hence it follows that God is the efficient, necessary, and absolutely first cause of all things (Corollaries I.-III.). Not only this, but also "God acts only according to the laws of His own nature, and constrained by no one" (XVII.), and is therefore a free cause (cf. Def. VII.) and the only free cause (Corol. II.). In a scholium to Prop. XVII. Spinoza illustrates the peculiar sense in which he affirms God to be the cause of all things, when he says, referring expressly to Prop. XVI.: "I think that I have shown sufficiently already, that from the supreme power or infinite nature of God * . * all things have resulted, or do, ever with the same necessity, result, in the same manner in which, from everlasting to everlasting, it results from the nature of a triangle—that its three angles are equal to two right angles." This is at best but a highly figurative application or illustration of the causal relation. The nature of a triangle or the nature of things may be to us a sufficient *reason* and the only one which we can give for the equality of the three angles

of a triangle to two right angles. But that this equality is an *effect* of that nature, distinguishable from and produced by the latter as its cause (as the relation of cause and effect would properly imply), is obviously not the case. Yet in the further discussion, in this same scholium, of the relation of the divine First "cause" to one of its finite "effects," Spinoza quietly abandons this false conception of the causal relation, and proceeds forthwith practically to adopt more nearly the common and literally exact one. Anticipating results to be subsequently demonstrated, he affirms that neither intellect nor will, as commonly understood, belongs to God, and that if there be anything in the divine nature to which these terms may be applied, it is so different from human intellect and will, that it can agree with the latter only in name. (The student of current English philosophy will notice the identity of this affirmation with what such men as Herbert Spencer now proclaim concerning the "Unknowable," the "First Cause"). To prove this, Spinoza employs, for the time being, an argument drawn from the necessary relation and distinction between cause and effect, as generally perceived and admitted. Here the divine intellect is asserted to be the cause, both of the (abstract) nature and of the (individual) existence of things. Of the former it may well be *conceived* to be the "cause," in the same sense in which the (universal) nature of the triangle is the "cause" of the (universal) equality of the three angles of every triangle to two right angles. For both the divine and the human intellect, regarded in their *nature*, are viewed abstractly, and may be *conceived* to be related to each other in any manner which does not involve logical contradiction. But of the individual or separate existence of created things, this cannot be affirmed. Granting that their "natures" may be accounted for by the allegation of their community with or essential involution in the divine nature, yet no such "cause" (reason) of their separate *existence* can be asserted. For they exist, *ex hypothesi*, as *distinct*, and at least relatively, independent things. As such they are numerically different from each other and from their cause. As finite, they are to be distinguished from the infinite, and cannot in so far be explained as involved (by abstract necessity) in the existence of the infinite. They must, unless regarded as independent and distinct existences *ab eterno*, be looked upon as bearing to the infinite the true relation of effect to cause, where cause and effect are not one, but different.

This necessity now, Spinoza, in the immediate case in hand, practically admits. "The caused," he now says, "is distinguished from its cause precisely in that which it derives from its cause." This obviously involves a totally different conception of the relation of cause and effect from that which the case of the triangle illustrated. From it would follow only, with respect to the proposition which Spinoza is here immediately seeking to establish (namely that human and divine intellect agree in nothing but in name), that the human intellect is *distinct* from the divine, but not that it differs from it in essential nature. (From the notion of "cause," or of the relation of God to created things, enunciated in Prop. XVI. and the illustration thereof cited above, it would even follow, on the contrary, that the created must not only resemble, but be identical with the creator). This is apparent from the very example here employed to illustrate the distinction between cause and effect, where these are really *distinct things*. The example is that of one human being who is the cause of the existence of another human being. Both are distinct, but both (as Spinoza neglects to add), are not unlike. From this Spinoza concludes that the divine creative intellect is *distinct* from the human, created intellect (which all men admit), and hence that the one is *toto coelo different* from the other, the two agreeing in nothing but in name! The latter part of the conclusion is so obviously and utterly unfounded in anything which the premises contain, and is moreover in such patent contradiction with the analogy of the example given by Spinoza himself, that one can but wonder at the simplicity of the fallacy by which he dupes himself and virtually seeks to dupe others. (The fallacy is concealed in the Latin text of Spinoza in the double sense given to the word *differre*, which is employed to express not only numerical but qualitative difference). For the rest, the right of Spinoza to assert the total disagreement of the human and divine intellects (or, in general, of the finite and the infinite) in everything but in name, may be successfully contested by comparing this assertion with Prop. XV., with Prop. XVII., Schol., and with the Demonstration to Prop. XVIII., all taken in connection with Axiom V. From the three former it appears that all things are in God, and especially must be conceived "through" or as related to the idea of God. From the latter we learn, that things which have nothing in common cannot be known, the one through the other, or the conception of the one does not involve the con-

ception of the other. It follows then that the human intellect, on the one hand, is only known "through" our knowledge of the divine intellect, and hence, on the other (by Ax. V.) that both have something more than the mere name in common. From all this it may appear that the geometrical form adopted by Spinoza did not in every instance secure exactness in the definition and use of terms, or preserve from logical inconsistency.

The notion of cause last employed, where cause is treated as numerically distinct from effect, and where the notion is expressly applied to the relation of the infinite cause to one of its finite effects (the human intellect), is immediately withdrawn in the next following proposition (XVIII.), and the other notion (illustrated above by the case of the triangle) is resumed and reaffirmed with reference to the same and all similar relations. This proposition declares that God, as the cause of all things, acts from within and not from without. The demonstration runs as follows: "All existing things exist in God and must be conceived through God (Prop. XV.), and therefore (Prop. XVI., Corol. I.) God is the cause of the things which are in him. This is the first point. Further, beside God there can be no substance (Prop. XIV.), that is (Def. III.), nothing which, being external to God, exists in itself. This is the second point. Therefore, God is the immanent and not the external (*transiens*) cause of all things: q. e. d." Notice that God is the cause of all things, because they "must be conceived through God." In other words, God, or substance, is general, things are particular. The former includes the latter, and the latter are not properly "conceived" except when their inclusion in the former is recognized. Precisely so the general idea of the triangle, fully comprehended, involves the special idea of the equality of its three angles to two right angles. This logical or ideal dependence of the particular upon the general is that which is held by Spinoza to constitute the relation of cause and effect; "the order and connection of ideas and the order and connection of things are the same" (Part II., Prop. VII.).

Now, God is eternal (XIX.). His nature and his existence are one and the same (XX.). Both are eternal truths, or, rather, they are both one and the same eternal truth (Corol. I.). These propositions amount to the assertion that there can be no question concerning the beginning and the end of being. Something must eternally be, and we cannot conceive the contrary. This is, in substance, asserted to be an "eternal truth" of fact. It is

the fact of evident generality in human thought, and when we have once apprehended it, Spinoza would tell us, we have apprehended the nature of God. For being is God's nature. The necessity and eternity and infinitude of the former (see Def. VI.) are the necessity and eternity and infinitude of God.

The divine nature, then, is the one infinite sea of being, and all finite things are but derivative manifestations of its substance. "Particular things are nothing but affections or modes of the attributes of God" (XXV., Corol.). It will be remembered that the divine attributes are identical with the divine substance. They simply "express" what this substance is. Thus, thought and extension are attributes of God, and the only ones, in fact, which Spinoza mentions among the infinite number which he ascribes to God. Hence we may say that God is thought, and God is extension, or, since thought and extension are for Spinoza, as for Descartes, respectively identical with mind and matter, God is mind and God is matter. Evidently Spinoza regards these two attributes as the only ones known to us. "Particular things," then, we may say, are, as far as known to us, "affections or modes" of mind, or matter, or both. In them, however, nothing is accidental. "Nothing in nature is contingent, but all things are constrained (*determinata*) by the necessity of the divine nature to exist and to act in a fixed manner" (XXIX.). The divine nature, as thus the constraining cause of an infinite variety of effects is termed, in agreement with the terminology of Scotus Erigena, *natura naturans*. The whole sum of effects, on the other hand, "i. e., all the modes of the attributes of God, in so far as the former are regarded as things, which are in God and can neither exist nor be conceived without God," is termed *natura naturata* (XXIX., Schol.). To the latter, exclusively, belong intellect, whether finite or infinite, will, desire, etc., and not to the former. These are all modes of the divine attribute of thought, and are hence effects (XXXI.). Hence there can be no freedom of the will (XXXII.). Since all things have resulted necessarily from the nature of God, such as it actually is, it follows that they "could not have been produced in any other manner or order than the manner and order in which they have been produced" (XXXIII.). The word "accidental," therefore, is a purely relative term, which, as employed by us, only serves to indicate our ignorance (Corol. I.). Further, it follows, says Spinoza, clearly from what has gone before, that all things have been

produced by God in the highest perfection, since they have all resulted necessarily from his own most perfect nature (Corol. II). In the same corollary Spinoza defends his conception of the manner in which God caused the world, against rival theories which ascribe the existence and nature of things to arbitrary fiat of a divine will, or to motives of any kind operating on the divine mind. It is better, since God's nature is most perfect, that all things should flow necessarily from it. It is better that God, although free from external constraint, should yet act constrained by the laws of his own being. God, then, is one who does all he can and cannot do otherwise than as he does. *Natura naturata* is the strict and complete expression of *natura naturans*. We need not therefore be surprised to find Spinoza, who had previously identified the *existence* of God with his nature or essence, now affirming, "The power of God is his very essence" (XXXIV). The connection is evident between this proposition and the two which immediately follow, and with which Part I. of the Ethics ends. "Whatever we conceive as being in God's power, necessarily exists." "Nothing exists, from the nature of which some effect does not flow." Thus we find that portion of the Ethics which expressly relates to "God," terminating with the conception of God as an universal force, acting throughout eternity with mechanical necessity, according to immutable laws of cause and effect. God is whatever is; he is nature, he is the one power, of which all things are strictly determined manifestations. He is the force which (in the language of to-day) "persists" amid all the changing variety of material and conscious phenomena. Moral and æsthetic perfections he has not. Such perfections (as Spinoza will subsequently attempt to show us) are myths. Perfection is simply reality (Part II., Def. VI.). It is *being*, and God is the "most perfect being" because he possesses most being, because in him is contained all possible being. God can only be distinguished from the world, in the Spinozistic system, in thought, by abstraction. As thus distinguished he is consequently nothing but an abstraction, i. e., he *is* nothing. Otherwise, or concretely regarded, he is identical with the world, and the use of the term "God," since it here denotes no being who is personal and the subject of moral attributes, is unjustified and misleading.

In an appendix to Part I. Spinoza seeks indirectly to re-enforce

the above materialistic and fatalistic conclusion, by showing that such a thing as intelligent choice, i. e., action determined by motives, or, still otherwise expressed, causation according to the so-called principle of final causes, nowhere exists, whether in the sphere of human activity or in the larger field of the divine agency of nature. The general belief of men to the contrary, as regards their own actions, is declared to result simply from their well-nigh universal ignorance of the causes which really determine these actions. Their ascription of motives or purposes to nature (or God) is likewise said to follow from an unjustifiable tendency to reason concerning what they do not directly know, from the analogy of that which they mistakenly think that they directly observe in themselves. Were it not (principally) for the existence of a science of mathematics, "which has to do, not with purposed ends, but only with the natures and properties of figures," Spinoza fears that "the truth would have remained eternally concealed from the human race." The doctrine of final causes, then, results from prejudice. It reverses the natural order, making cause to be effect, the earlier to be the later, and *vice versa*. Further, it makes of that which is highest and most "perfect," the least perfect. When one assigns the "will of God" as the reason of any event, he is therefore simply taking refuge in the "asylum of ignorance." Although these opinions follow directly from the principles of Spinoza, as set forth in Part I. of the Ethics, yet the attempt to confirm them by demonstration of the folly of the opposite view is weakened by the fact that he does not choose to understand the views of his opponents in their best sense. He does not distinguish between the "teleology" of the simple and ignorant, who see in all things an express adaptation to human and individual needs and improvement, and only this, and the teleology of the wise, defended by all the greater theistic idealists from Aristotle's time till to-day, who look at the universe as a whole, and find design more in the adaptation of the part to the whole, than in the subserviency of the whole to the part.

Other "prejudices" discussed by Spinoza in this appendix are those which underlie the common conceptions of good and evil, beauty and ugliness. These are all briefly disposed of as "modes of imagination," varying with each man "according to the nature of his brain," and having no foundation in knowledge. The "perfection of things must be estimated solely with reference to

their nature and power." And if any one ask, finally, "why God did not create men so that they would follow the guidance of reason alone," Spinoza answers, "Because he lacked not the material for the creation of all things, from the lowest to the highest degree of perfection; or, more properly expressed, because the laws of his nature were so comprehensive that they sufficed for the production of all things which can be conceived by an infinite intellect, as I have demonstrated in Prop. XVI." From this it would follow that the universe must contain an indefinite number of orders of existences superior to man, reaching up to the angelic nature. Of these, however, Spinoza says nothing expressly.

Part II. of the Ethics treats of the "Nature and Origin of the Mind." Of the "Definitions" with which it begins, some of the most important are those in which a material body is defined as a "mode, which expresses in a fixed and definite manner the essence of God," viewed under the attribute of extension (I.), an *idea* is said to be a conception formed by the mind (not received by it passively from without, as in the perception of external objects) (III.), an *adequate idea* is called one which, independently of its object, possesses all the properties or intrinsic marks of a true idea (IV.), and *reality* and *perfection* are affirmed to express one and the same thing (VI). The "Axioms" assert that the essence of man does not involve necessary existence (I.), that "Man thinks" (II.), that such "modes of thought as love, desire, or any others which are termed emotions of the mind, cannot exist without the presence in the same individual of an idea of the thing loved, desired, etc.," but the idea may exist without the emotion (III). "We feel our own bodies to be affected in many ways" (IV). "We neither feel nor perceive any individual things other than bodies and modes of thought" (V).

In the first proposition we are informed that "thought is an attribute of God, or God is a thinking thing." The mystery which in Part I. was left surrounding the nature of the divine thought is not cleared up in the demonstration affixed to this proposition. Just as in the former plan, that which we connect with the idea of thought (viz: intelligence, as resulting from the possession and implied in the use of intellect) was denied to God, so here "particular thoughts, or this and that thought" are said to be modes which "express" and "involve" a divine attribute of thought, but are not identical with it. Since the thought of God

is no thought in particular, it can only be thought in general, and that too, infinite, without limitation or determination. But this is an irrational conception, and hence leads to the conclusion that the "infinite thought" of God is no thought at all. Still, in the corollary to Prop. I. it is affirmed that "we can conceive an infinite, thinking being." But there is nothing in the corollary nor in Def. IV. of Part I., to which in its reference is made, that shows that it is really possible to conceive an infinite thinking being who has no thoughts in particular. The conclusion is left to be drawn—and it is impossible to avoid drawing it—that Spinoza was not perfectly clear concerning that which he affirmed, and hence that he fell into grave inconsistencies.

"Extension," says Spinoza in the second proposition, "is an attribute of God, or God is an extended thing." "In God there is necessarily an idea, as well of his essence, as of all things which follow necessarily therefrom" (III). From this proposition and the demonstration annexed to it, it would seem to follow that there is a divine intellect, in which there is an infinite multiplicity of ideas. In what manner does the "idea of God and of all things which follow necessarily therefrom" exist "in God," if not as a conscious, intellectual possession? If God in any proper sense has the idea of all these things, then he has "particular thoughts," in contradiction to that which was above quoted as asserted by Spinoza. But, here, again, just as he seems to be verging towards an intelligible theory of the divine knowledge, Spinoza appears to oscillate anew toward an opposite opinion. Prop. IV. states that the "idea of God, from which things [and ideas] infinite in number follow in infinitely numerous ways, can be only a single one." It is difficult to see what, in this connection, can be the pertinence of this proposition (which rests, by the way, simply on the alleged reason that "God is one"), unless it be intended to teach that the many ideas of finite things, which "flow from" the idea of God, are only implicitly or logically contained in God's idea of his own essence, that God has, properly speaking, only this one idea (which, it would be easy to show, on psychological grounds, is to have no idea, i. e., to think nothing at all), and that therefore he does not distinctly possess the idea of particular things. This is undoubtedly the intent of Spinoza. God is for him the universal. The expression "idea of God," and "infinite thought," are but descriptions of God, considered under one of the attributes under which the human mind

perceives him. When the divine being is conceived under so abstract a form, he ceases to be a definite object of thought, and it is no wonder that there should be obscurity and wavering in the attempts of the philosopher to make accurate statements concerning him. But it is time to allow our narration to take its course. These digressions have been permitted only for the purpose of calling attention to difficulties and uncertainties which are founded in the nature of the text itself, and for which the careful student must constantly watch in his study of it.

The causes of our ideas are not the objects which they represent, but God himself, viewed in his quality as thinking being (Prop. V.). "The order and connection of ideas and the order and connection of things are the same" (VII.). The proof of this weighty proposition (held also, substantially by Descartes) is found by Spinoza in Axiom IV. of Part I. The order and connection of ideas agree with the order and connection of things, because the knowledge of everything which is caused depends on the knowledge of its cause. Things and the ideas of them, Spinoza observes in a scholium, are but the same substance regarded under different aspects—in the one instance as modes of extension, and in the other as modes of thought. Viewed under the latter aspect, the whole order of nature is to be ideally explained. Viewed under the former, it must be explained mechanically, or according to the laws of extension.

As the human body is a portion of the divine extension, so the "human mind is a part of the infinite intellect of God" (XI. Cor.). The human mind is a self-conscious idea (a description, which results from an imperfect psychological analysis and is inherently absurd). The "object" of this idea is the human body (XIII.). Man is therefore a compound of mind (*mens*) and body (XIII. Corol.), and this is true not only of man, but of all other individual things, all of which, although in different degrees, are endowed with soul (Scholium). The power of the mind to perceive and distinctly to know varies along with the independent power of the body (see the same Scholium and Prop. XIV.).

Memory is explained as resulting from an association ("concatenation") of ideas (XVIII.). Consciousness (*idea ideæ*, the "idea"—or "mind"—perceiving itself) is the very form, inherent in the idea (mind), which it has when regarded as a mode of actual thought, without relation to its object (XXI. Schol.). The body being made up of numerous individual parts, which cannot

be distinctly and separately known except by the slow process of analysis and comparison, it follows that our ideas of these parts, as also of the affections of the body, are naturally indistinct and confused (XXIV.-XXIX.). But all ideas, in so far as we derive them from participation in the divine intelligence, are true (cf. Prop. XXXII.), and every idea in us, which is "absolute or adequate and [intrinsically] perfect," is true (XXIV.). Nor is there contained in ideas any positive element or quality, in view of which they can be termed false (XXXIII.). "Falsehood consists in that lack of knowledge (*cognitionis privatione*), which inadequate or mutilated and confused ideas involve" (XXXV.).

But if the knowledge of particular things, all of which are contingent and perishable (in this sense, and in this sense alone, that we can have no adequate knowledge of their duration, (see Prop. XXXI., Corol.) is subject to confusion and imperfection, our ideas of that which is common to all things, being contained alike in the part and in the whole, can only be adequate (XXXVIII.). Hence Spinoza infers that there are "some ideas or notions common to all men" (Corol.). These ideas constitute the foundations of reason (XLIV., Corol. II.). There are three kinds of knowledge, the first through "vague experience . . .

. . . opinion or imagination," the second through universal notions and adequate ideas of the qualities of things, or through "reason," and the third through intuition. The last of these proceeds from the adequate idea of the "formal essence" of certain attributes of God to the knowledge of the essence of things (XL., Schol. II.). "Knowledge of the first kind is the only cause of falsehood, while that of the second and third kinds is necessarily true" (XLI.). He who has a true idea knows at the same time that he has a true idea and cannot doubt the truth of that which the idea represents (XLIII.). Just as light makes known both itself and darkness, so truth is the criterion of itself and of falsehood (Schol.).

It belongs to the nature of reason to regard things not as contingent, but as necessary (XLIV.) or "under the form of eternity" (Corol. II.). This it can do, because "every idea representing a body or any single actually existing thing, necessarily involves the eternal and infinite essence of God" (XLV.). Of this divine essence the human mind has adequate knowledge (XLVII.). Such knowledge is involved in every true idea (XLVI.).

Finally, "will and intellect are one and the same" (XLIX., Corol.). The foundation of will is therefore not in desire, but in intelligence. The will is the "faculty of affirmation and negation" (XLVIII., Schol.). Every idea, as such, involves affirmation or negation, i. e., an act of will (XLIX., Schol.). In the human mind there is no absolute or free will, but the mind is determined to will this or that by some cause, which cause is determined by some other cause, and this likewise by another, and so on *in infinitum* (XLVIII.). There is no mental volition, i. e., no affirmation or negation, except such as springs from an idea and is involved in it as such (XLIX. The demonstration contains a specimen of very questionable reasoning). Spinoza concludes Part II. of the Ethics with some practical observations designed to show the moral and social utility of a doctrine which subordinates the human will to natural, i. e., divine necessity.

The three remaining parts of the Ethics must be briefly summarized. Part III. treats of the "Origin and Nature of the Emotions." These are said to consist in confused ideas, resulting from the union of mind and body, and the subjection of man to various influences from without, which agree or interfere with the conatus inherent (though unconsciously) in every being, and which leads each one instinctively to "affirm," i. e., be pleased with, or "deny," i. e., repel with displeasure, whatever furthers or resists its own tendency. The fundamental emotions are, accordingly, pleasure and displeasure (or "sorrow"), along with desire. From them Spinoza seeks to demonstrate the direct or indirect derivation of forty-five others. On them he founds our notions of good and bad, and all our consequent moral action.

Part IV. is entitled "Of Human Servitude, or of the Power of the Emotions." It is in reality, however, or in substance a treatise on the due estimate of the emotions, severally and collectively, and upon the course of self-culture through which they are subjected to the control of reason. It is rendered in a measure indistinct and inconclusive from the failure of Spinoza to recognize theoretically the fact of man's moral freedom. Practically, or by implication, he is obliged to admit this fact, and yet he labors, as far as words can go, to make it appear that he denies it. His general principles require him to recognize, in his speculations respecting practical ethics, only the "natural man," subject to the laws of physical necessity, and this he seeks to do. But he shows himself fully conscious that there is also a "spiritual

man," whose spiritual food is knowledge, and for whom the most important practical problem is to reduce by independent and earnest labor, freely undertaken and freely continued, the natural man to a state of due subjection and obedience. The contradiction is between premises and language, which are wholly fatalistic, and even materialistic, and an evident aspiration and intent which belie the premises. The good and the bad, we are told, are relative terms, which signify for man respectively that which promotes or hinders the natural development and due functioning of all his faculties. The term virtue, relating to man, is defined and professedly employed in its wholly natural signification, as when we speak of the "virtue" of an herb, etc. Just as the medicinal "virtue" of an herb is its peculiar power to effect a specific result, so human virtue is identical with the power of man to produce certain characteristic works. Its main-spring is that *conatus* in man which impels him to seek his own preservation, or, in other words, to act according to the laws of his own nature. Such action is virtuous, and none other. But Spinoza maintains, in substantial agreement with Aristotle, that the highest function or virtue of man is to know, or to use and follow the guidance of reason. On these principles his ethics, in the narrower sense, is founded.

The fifth and last Part of the Ethics is a continuation of the discussion begun in Part IV. under the title, "Of the Power of the Intellect, or of Human Freedom." This "power" is a power to eliminate from the emotions everything in them which is of the nature of passion. It is the power of true knowledge, which shows us all things, including our emotions, as necessary, and tends to remove disquiet and discontent. True knowledge, "of the third kind" ("intuitive" knowledge, as above explained), proceeding from the knowledge of divine attributes to the knowledge of their modes, or of finite things and phenomena, leads to the love of God. In such knowledge and love consists man's freedom. This love is disinterested, without envy and without jealousy, and increases with the knowledge that it is shared by others.

Imagination, continues Spinoza, and all faculties which are allied to it, depend on the union of mind and body, and disappear with their separation. But the mind as such, as a cognitive agent, is imperishable. Passion and all emotion which depends on the presence of the body, are perishable. Only that love is eternal which is through the intellect, the love of God founded on know-

ledge of him. But the eternity ascribed to the mind must not be confounded with unlimited duration. It excludes what duration implies, viz: change, and is founded on the identity in substance, of the mind with the divine, immutable being. In fact, the whole sum of finite minds, taken together, constitute the "eternal and infinite intellect of God" (Prop. XL., Schol.). Thus their eternity is the eternity of the divine mind. "God loves himself with infinite intellectual love" (XXXV.). On the other hand, "the intellectual love of the [finite] mind to God is God's own love, wherewith he loves himself" (XXXVI.). "Hence it follows that God, in loving himself, loves men, and that consequently God's love to men and the intellectual love of the [finite] mind to God are one and the same" (Schol.). Such love is proof against all attacks. With the increase of knowledge "of the second and third kinds," the influence of pernicious emotions and the fear of death are diminished. The same result follows from perfect bodily culture, on account of the close connection between the latter and intellectual soundness.

Although we are now convinced that the active portion of man's mental nature (the cognitive intellect—Aristotle's "active reason") is immortal, yet this conviction is not the ground of our assurance of the excellent character and practical utility of virtue, piety, and religion, these having been previously demonstrated to possess an independent value apart from all considerations of expected reward or dreaded punishment. "Not happiness, but virtue itself, is the reward of virtue, in which we rejoice, not because we restrain our lusts; on the contrary, because we delight in virtue, therefore is it that we are able to restrain our lusts."

This is the last proposition of the *Ethics*, and with it Spinoza claims to have completed the demonstration of his ethical principles. He has shown the power and advantage of knowledge, and the impotence and shame of ignorance. The way to happiness and moral health is evident, and open to all, though difficult to follow and by the majority neglected. "But all things of distinguished excellence are as difficult as rare." With these words Spinoza's masterpiece of speculative and practical philosophy closes.

Spinoza's celebrated contemporary, Leibnitz, regarded Spinozism as the "last extreme of Cartesianism." And, indeed, the student of the history of philosophy will note, readily and with interest, the close connection between the two systems. With

Descartes, God is recognized, theoretically, as the creator and preserver of all things. The continued existence of things is due to the constant agency of God. In this agency, the agency of an *intelligent power*, is found the true and universal type of genuine causation. Descartes recognizes, also, the absolute liberty of God. On the other hand, Descartes as a physicist showed himself completely under the domination of the "scientific" conception of mechanism or automatism—a conception which, as experience shows, inevitably leads in the direction of atheistic conclusions, unless kept in due subjection to, and not allowed for an instant to usurp the place of, the true idea of causation. (The still unresolved problem for many of our dilettante but not uninfluential philosophers of to-day, is to reconcile mechanism with idealism, necessity with freedom; to see how *mechanism* is, as the word implies, but the use or operation of means for ends, and that the ends are set and the means directed by ideal causes—i. e. as above expressed, by *intelligent power*; and, finally, that the "necessity" of things is the necessity of wisdom and not of unyielding fate or of a mechanism which, of itself, can do nothing). Now, Descartes may be said to have handed over to Spinoza the two conceptions, the mechanistic and the idealistic or theistic, in unreconciled dualism, but with a marked tendency on the part of the former to supplant the latter. Spinoza takes them up, and instead of assigning distinctly to each its due place, seeks to blend them—but with this result, that the mechanical conception gains the upper hand and is made virtually primary, while the idealistic mostly fades out of sight or is treated as a derivative result of the former. Thus, the prevailing idea of God in the first part of the *Ethics* turns out substantially identical with the pseudo idea of a universal force, the blind "cause" (?) of all things, which pervades so much of the philosophical writing of to-day. The duality of thought and extension, in Descartes' philosophy, reappears in the form of two attributes (and the only two of the "infinite number," which Spinoza mentions) of the one divine substance; identical in fact, but differing in manifestation.

The God of Spinoza is conspicuous on account of its lack of moral attributes. In this it resembles the God of Aristotle, but for different reasons. Aristotle's God possesses all intrinsic excellence, being inherently perfect. If he is not represented as good, just, tender, loving, etc., this is not because Aristotle considered these qualities as mere "modes of thought," denoting

nothing real, but because they were not included in his ideal of perfection. But the God of Spinoza is left without them, because the words good, perfect, and the like, taken in a moral sense, have no absolute significance, but are simply signs of "prejudices" of the human mind; and, further, because a *force*, abstractly considered, can have no moral character. God's "love" of himself, and of men in himself, can only be considered as a kind of mechanical consequence, or "virtue" of the operation of intellect.

There is abundant evidence to show that Spinoza possessed a nature deeply attuned to idealism. This may account for much that is inspiring in his doctrines of practical ethics and for many portions of his phraseology which the principles of his geometry of thought would not warrant.

But this is not the place for extended criticism. Many, doubtless, will be led by the occurrence of this second centenary of Spinoza's death to study his works, and to weigh his teaching. Like all human productions, they contain, in intimate union, large measures of fundamental truth, mixed with error. The mastery of his system, accompanied by a strictly just correction of its errors and appreciation of its truth, will be the best tribute that any can pay to the memory of one whose life was blameless, and who was undoubtedly an earnest and intrepid seeker after truth.

KANT'S "ÆSTHETIC."*

BY DAVID WARREN PHIPPS.

I.

THE IDEA OF A CRITIQUE OF THE PURE REASON.

Kant criticises the human reason with special reference to its ability to attain knowledge transcending sensuous experience. He assumes Mind and independent Thing; and begins with the hypothesis that the seeming characteristics of the thing are really from the mind, and not marks of the thing-in-itself. For the

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